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ABSTRACT

Part 3 of a 6-part series of pamphlets contains anecdotes of a vocational agriculture teacher's (who was also a State Supervisor) experiences in both young farmer and adult farmer programs. The pamphlet, based on actual happenings, is intended primarily for use in pre-service and in-service vocational agriculture teacher education and presents questions and activities at the conclusion of each story to prompt discussion. The five stories in the first section, Young Farmer Programs, revolve around class organization, program revision by students, political activity, State supervisors, and family involvement. The 10 stories in the second section, Adult Farmer Programs, focus on adult classes, the teacher student relationship, farm visits, activities, problems, and field trips. (JB)

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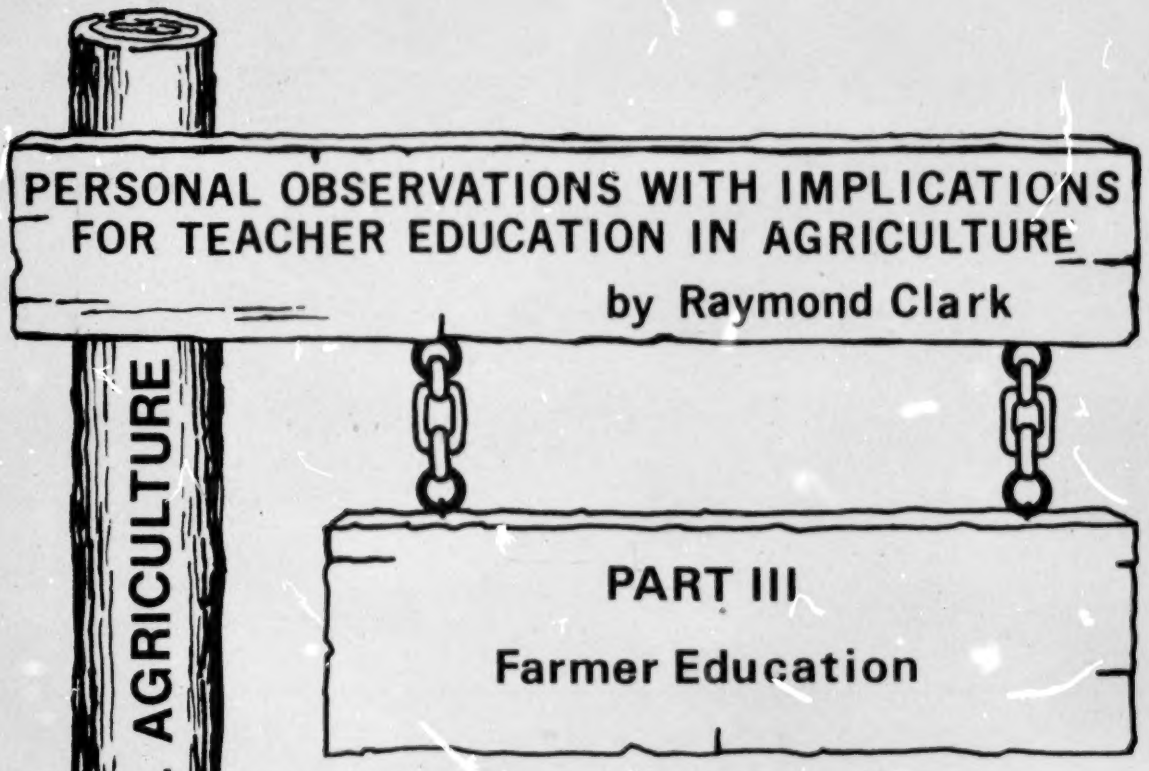
PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE
by Raymond Clark
PART III
Farmer Education
EXPERIENCES IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

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EXPERIENCES IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Part III
Post-High School Farmer Training Programs
A. Young-Farmer Programs
B. Adult-Farmer Programs

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October 1971

Foreword

This is one of a series of pamphlets dealing with several aspects of the program of vocational agriculture. Each pamphlet consists of a series of events and happenings as they actually occured. Each is a true story, and it describes an actual experience which I have had during the past forty-five years in the vocational agriculture field. Many of the experiences described here are those which I had while I was a teacher of vocational agriculture. Others describe experiences as a teacher-educator or as a state supervisor of vocational education in agriculture.

These stories of events and happenings may be used by many different persons. (1) By students to discover the nature of some of the work of the teacher of vocational agriculture. Some who read these stories may become more determined to enter the profession. Others may decide to find other fields of work. (2) By student teachers who may read these stories as they find themselves confronted with similar experiences or problems. We may be able to share experiences through the medium of these pages. Some ideas may be found to help smooth out rough spots for student teachers. I hope they will be able to discover other solutions to problems and other methods which will be of value to them. (3) By my colleagues in vocational agriculture. They may find a few new suggestions; they are likely to discover that we have had similar problems; and, I feel certain that they will be in a position to say, "That reminds me of an experience I had _ _ _ _ _."

In presenting this series of anecdotes, it is recognized that they reflect the objectives of "establishment in farming," and "developing agricultural leadership" which were accepted at the time they were written. Teachers in service and those who are preparing for teaching may ask themselves, "How would I meet similar situations today?" What new or different solutions would I need to use to meet similar situations with students preparing for careers in farming and/or agricultural business?

While any division of the series of anecdotes results in some overlapping, for the convenience of readers, the anecdotes have been assembled into pamphlets under the following titles:

1. Teaching High School Students
2. Future Farmers Programs
3. Post-High School Farmer Training Programs
   A. Young-Farmer Programs
   B. Adult-Farmer Programs
4. Problems of Relationship
5. Program Planning
6. Student Teachers

Students preparing to teach vocational agriculture will find in these anecdotes examples of many typical problems faced by teachers of agriculture. It is hoped that these problems will help students visualize real situations as they work through the professional education courses required for certification, and as they consider the subject matter of technical agriculture in relation to planning and conducting instructional programs in local schools

Teachers in-service, who may read these stories, will say, "Let me tell you about a similar experience I had _ _ _ _ _," and "I would have done it differently. I would _ _ _ _ _." In groups of experienced teachers this could lead to spirited discussion and demonstration to emphasize an aspect of method, or application of principle.

Among either pre-serivce or in-service groups of teachers it is hoped that these experiences and happenings will stimulate teachers to study methods and principles in a realistic and constructive manner.

Raymond M. Clark, Professor Emeritus
Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum
July 1971

The Post-High School Farmer Training Programs

The young-farmer program was originally designed to help out-of-school young men to continue their education in agriculture under the direction of the local teacher of vocational agriculture. More recently the program has been modified to assist men to continue preparation for farming and/or for agricultural business and industry. Usually it is a part-time non-credit program as contrasted with the more concentrated technical programs offered at Michigan State University and some other Land Grant universities and at some of the community colleges.

The adult-farmer program was originally intended to serve farmers who were already established in farming but who needed to learn about new practices, new varieties, different management procedures and other matters of concern to farmers.

As you read this series of anecdotes regarding some of the experiences I have had with farmer classes, you will discover that here are challenging groups of men who are anxious to keep moving toward their goals. For the teacher they can provide not only challenge, but also great satisfaction and lasting friendships.

Many of the anecdotes in this pamphlet were originally written in the early 1950's. At that time most farmers had a poultry enterprise, at least to supply the farm family. Poultry was very nearly a universal farm enterprise. Also, farm programs were much more diversified in terms of enterprises than they are today. This will account for some of the kinds of classes and for some of the conversation recorded in these anecdotes.

However, in spite of the "out-of-dateness" of some of the technical agriculture included in these anecdotes, we believe they carry some suggestions used by the teachers such as the use of committees of class members to help plan, the participation of class members, and many other characteristics to be studied and evaluated by present and prospective teachers of agriculture.

As one studies the needs of men engaged in agriculture--both on-farm and off-farm he will discover vast areas to be covered. He will begin to discover the need to work with the class members in selecting areas for study, and perhaps encouraging some forms of independent and individualized study to help students make application to their individual problems.

We have not included questions following each of these anecdotes, as has been done in some other pamphlets of this series. We suggest that these anecdotes be used as a "take-off" for discussing such topics as: (1) the function of the school for providing part-time continuing education for out-of-school youth and adults; (2) how to organize out-of-school youth and adults for a continuing educational program, and (3) how to conduct class sessions for out-of-school youth.

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POST-HIGH SCHOOL FARMER TRAINING PROGRAMS

A. Young-Farmer Programs

WE ORGANIZE A YOUNG FARMER CLASS

One afternoon in the early fall, just as school was closing for the day, I was cleaning up the Vocational Agriculture room at the high school when in walked four or five of my graduates of past years. They were young men who had been active in the Future Farmer Chapter and they were now farming in the school area.

I had seen them occasionally since they had finished their high school, but had never mentioned further education to them. We had never considered young farmer classes at that time, in fact there was not a single young farmer class organized in the whole state. I am afraid we had the idea that when a boy graduated from high school, our responsibility had ended.

I greeted these young men as warmly as I knew how and we brought ourselves up to date on each others activities. Then their spokesman said, "We have been talking among ourselves and have decided that we would like to have some meetings to sort of keep up-to-date on the new things that are happening in agriculture. Maybe we could talk over some of the new ideas and exchange some of our experiences. Its kind of hard to keep up on everything by reading. We wondered if you would have time to meet with us and sort of help us get organized and help plan our program."

What a compliment, and what a challenge that was! Here was a group of young farmers who had voluntarily, and without a single suggestion from anyone outside their group, coming back for more vocational agriculture. I had never even heard of a young farmers class in a secondary school at that time.

Needless to say we had "some meetings". The boys brought about 25 of their neighbors, nearly all former vocational agriculture students of mine. They agreed on the topics they wanted to discuss. They elected their officers to keep the records and to plan for a recreational

program and I helped lead discussions on the topics they selected for study. We met regularly for several years without any of the formalities of reports on supervised farming, reimbursement on salary, or records of attendance. I visited the young men on their farms whenever I could and we had farming programs which would be a credit to any young farmer program of a more modern period.

We had more than that; some of the issues these boys brought up had dynamite in them for a teacher in the public school, yet many were vital to these young men and they tackled them. I remember one evening the president got up to call the meeting to order and he said, "You know the county board of supervisors voted today to put up the question of retention of the office of county agricultural agent to a vote of the people at the next election. Now it doesn't seem to me that us young fellows just getting started in farming can afford to let the people do away with the county agent's office." This was a hot issue in the county and I wondered how the people would feel about my boys taking up such an issue in a meeting for which I was responsible.

I told the boys that this was an issue they would have to handle themselves and they went ahead. Before the evening was much older, they had made plans for members of the group to hold meetings in every township in the county to discuss the issue and urge retention of the office. The voters retained the office, I am sure largely through the efforts of these boys. The political experts in the county were sure that the vote would be against the office.

I have often wondered what happened in the training or experience of these young men to cause them to come in and ask for "some meetings so we can keep up-to-date on our agriculture." In looking back over the many intervening years I think I can see some features of their high school vocational agriculture program which may have contributed to their request for more training. At the risk of seeming conceited, I should like to enumerate some of them:

1. A practical problem approach was always used for all of our technical

agriculture subject matter. The boys were prepared to seek up-to-date, scientific information to use in the solution of their problems. The problems discussed in our classes were their problems, taken from their farms and the findings in class were used in the solution of the problems at home. They had to be right!

2. The boys recognized that conditions change rapidly and constantly. They had been taught to keep their information and their practices up-to-date. They realized how rapidly farming practices change and they knew that high school graduation for them could not mean the end of education if they wanted to become successful, well-established farmers.

3. They had learned to exchange ideas freely in vocational agriculture - in the classes and in the Future Farmer work. They recognized that they could help themselves by exchanging ideas regarding the solution of their problems, particularly if they could have access to the new ideas and information available to them in the local department of vocational agriculture.

4. They had unlimited confidence in their own ability to meet problems and to find solutions so long as they could work together on them. They had learned in their Future Farmer work that together they could be successful in almost any undertaking. This confidence carried over to their adult life in activities such as the undertaking which resulted in the retention of the county agricultural agent's office.

5. I am sure they believed in the Creed of the Future Farmer which they had memorized and which they were living--"I believe in the future of farming...I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others...I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining..." They were living their creed.

A YOUNG-FARMER CLASS REVISES ITS PROGRAM

The state supervisor was at lunch one day with Dick Jones, a very successful teacher of vocational agriculture, when the conversation shifted to the topic of organizing and conducting young-farmer classes. Dick seemed lost in thought and troubled for a few moments and then burst forth with, "You know, I'm worried about my young-farmer class. They just don't seem to be interested this year like they were last year when we started."

This was a surprise to the supervisor. Dick was one of the best teachers and no one dreamed that he really worried about maintaining interest in any of his classes. He said, "Is that so? What are they studying this year?"

"They're working on dairy production. Just now the subject is feeding cows."

"How did you pick that subject? Did you pick it for them?"

"No, of course not. They have a committee that I meet with. They decide on the lessons and report to the class. If the class want the lessons changed, they say so and we change."

"Well, that's supposed to be a good technique, but why do you suppose they chose dairy?"

Dick looked puzzled for a moment. He wondered what the supervisor could be getting at. He replied, "They all have dairy cows on their home farms. Why wouldn't they study dairy. It's their most important enterprise."

The supervisor thought a moment and then said, "Yes, you're right, but Dick, What is a young-farmer anyway?"

"He's an out of school young man who wants to become established in farming, but who isn't yet established. But what's that got to do with it?"

"Well, I was just wondering, Do you suppose these young men of yours are concerned with feeding cows, or in how to rent or buy land? Do you suppose their real problems lie in the area of how can I get established

in farming instead of in the areas they accepted from the committee?"

Dick thought some more and then he said, "Maybe you're right! They wouldn't be likely to put that thought into words would they? But I'll bet that's what they really would go for. I'm going to try it and find out."

The supervisor and Dick listed a number of problem areas having to do with credit, partnership and lease agreements, purchase of land, and the like. When they had finished Dick said, "Boy! If they go for this we'll be on it for the next three or four years. I believe we've got something!"

"Well, let me know how it works after you try it," were the parting words of the supervisor.

Dick left with, "Don't worry, I will."

Several months later Dick and the Supervisor met again and Dick started the conversation with, "Say! You know that idea worked! Those boys just eat that stuff up and we've got a lot of written partnerships in operation already."

"That's good, must be the dads accept it too if they agree to the partnerships."

"Sure they do. We had some joint meetings after we had studied the ideas in class and explained the ideas to the dads and its going good. I'm sure glad we had that talk that day."

"So am I. How about next year, will this same group be back for another class?"

"Yes, they'll be back. They don't want to give up their group and they want to do some more work on how to get established. In another year or two they will be far enough along the route to establishment so they will be ready for some of the production problems we were on before our last talk. That's when I'll begin to call them an adult-farmer class. They won't need to know the difference. But we'll have to start another class to take care of the younger boys."

A YOUNG-FARMER CLASS ENTERS POLITICS

Dick Jones was a teacher of vocational agriculture in a relatively large high school in southern Michigan. The school was located in a county where the farmers had been asserting themselves every year or two by doing away with the office of county agricultural agent. Sometimes they requested his resignation and sometimes their board of supervisors simply failed to vote an appropriation to maintain his office. This time the supervisors were almost equally divided in their opinions regarding the maintenance of the office so they decided to leave the matter to the voters at the next election.

Dick had read reports of the action of the supervisors in the local newspaper. He hated to see the office discontinued. He had a very nice working relationship with the county agent, and they had been of mutual help on many occasions. However, Dick felt that he was a public servant and therefore could not enter the fight himself, so he decided to continue his program and let the voters decide the issue on their own.

The young-farmer class was scheduled to have a meeting this evening. Dick was proud of this group. They had asked to have, "some meetings to keep up to date on new developments in agriculture," and Dick had been meeting with them once a week all winter. As they came into the room tonight John, the president, said to Dick, "We'd like to take some time tonight to discuss a problem by ourselves. You can stay if you want, but we don't want to involve you in this business in any way."

Dick was taken by surprise and he was bursting with curiosity as to what the business could be. He said, "O.K. Do you want to have the discussion we had planned first?"

John said, "Yes, we don't want to miss that. Can you close it up a half hour early? That will give us a chance to take care of our business."

Dick agreed and went ahead with the discussion which had been planned. When he had finished, he turned the meeting over to president, John.

John opened the discussion with, "You fellows probably read in the paper about the county agent problem. You know we have been without an agent more than half of the time for the last six years or more. I don't know what you fellows think about it, but I don't see how us fellows, just getting started in farming can afford to lose our agent now. What do you fellows think?"

"I agree."

"He certainly helped me out of a jam last week."

"I don't know what I'd do without him."

These replies and many similiar ones were immediately forthcoming. Then someone said, "What can we do about it?"

Another said, "I think we ought to get right out and tell the people what we think."

One young man said, "Do you mean we ought to cover the whole county? After all we only represent a small part of the county in this group."

Still another said, "Yes, I believe we could cover the whole county. I believe the people would listen to us and we could carry the vote the way we want it."

After the discussion died down, John said, "Well, do you want to vote on the question of covering the county?"

They voted to hold a meeting in each township in the county. It was agreed that they would advertise the meetings, arrange for the halls in each township and present their views.

Before the meeting adjourned they had appointed members to be responsible for each meeting. They were to work in pairs and were to report back at later meetings regarding their success.

Needless to say they carried the election to retain the office of county agricultural agent and never since then has the question been debated by the board of supervisors.

THE STATE SUPERVISOR VISITS A YOUNG-FARMER CLASS

The state supervisor of agricultural education called at a school in one of the oldest farming areas of Michigan one evening for the purpose of visiting a young farmer program which had been started there. It was one of the first young farmer programs in the state and it had aroused much interest. Many pessimists had said, "You can't interest young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five in anything that looks like an organization."

Others had said, "Let's try and see." Dick Jones the teacher of vocational agriculture in the school was one of those who wanted to "Try it out and see what he could do." He was considered to be a very good teacher of high school boys and he was making his first attempt at organizing and teaching a class of young-farmers.

The state supervisor arrived early, long before the class was scheduled to begin. Dick met him at the door of the agriculture room. Dick said, "I'm glad you're here. I have been wanting to talk over this new program with someone."

"What's the trouble, isn't the class running OK?"

"Yes, it's going good. We're studying dairying and the boys seem to be interested. They are working on now to get started with a dairy herd of their own along with their study of feeding and breeding. I think these topics seem to fit together in nice shape and the men are interested."

"Well then what do you want to talk over?"

"Its pretty hard to explain, but I'm not quite satisfied. You know the farms in this area are pretty largely in families that have owned them for three or four generations. But these boys don't seem to quite measure up to the traditions - - - I guess I can't explain my feeling, but you'll sense it when they come in. I'm going to ask you to talk to them for a few minutes just before we close the class."

The state supervisor was horrified and shocked. Who ever heard of a supervisor talking to a class without having his speech all written out and rehearsed? So he said, "But what'll I talk about? I haven't any speech to give!"

"Oh, That's all right. Just tell them about what other classes are doing, or something like that. Maybe you can tell them something that will help us improve the situation I have been worrying about."

The young men began to drift in. They looked like normal, healthy young farmers, but without much pride in themselves. They were unshaven. Many of them were smoking cigars, with every appearance of the small boy who is having his first smoke. Their boots were dirty and their blue jeans equally soiled with the mud and dirt of a late winter day on a southern Michigan farm.

Dick called the class to order and went ahead with the lesson. He had a very good discussion on the aspects of the dairy enterprise which had been planned for the meeting. When he finished the lesson, he called on the state supervisor for "some remarks."

The state supervisor had been wondering what he should say to these young men. Should he suggest to them that they clean up and exhibit some pride in themselves? Should he suggest other activities in which they might engage as a group? What should he say?

He still had these questions in his mind when he faced the class. He began, "You fellows represent one of many groups in this state which have come together to work on new developments in agriculture. You are interested in problems of becoming established in farming. - - - in partnership agreements, - - - in credit and financing, - - - of renting and buying, - - -. But I believe there are other things you are interested in too." Here he edged closer to the door and continued.

"I'll bet some of you fellows can't ask a girl for a dance without being embarrassed." Some of the young men looked pretty black at such a blunt statement. The supervisor continued, "I'll bet some of you fellows are at a loss to know how to handle the array of silver at a

banquet." At this point the supervisor felt that the young men might try to beat him to the door, but they didn't. Instead they began to nod assent.

"Why don't you fellows get organized and put on a little dance down in the gym some night?" was the next question of the supervisor. "Possibly you could even swing a banquet at the close of the season. After all, those are some of the things a fellow has to learn if he is to be a good farmer in this day and age."

After the men had gone, Dick said, "Boy! I'm glad you said those things." You could say them while I couldn't. That's just what I think they needed."

The state supervisor went on his way. Several months later he met Dick and inquired, "What happened after that class meeting that night?"

"Well", replied Dick, "They began to clean up when they came to class."

"Did they have a dance or a banquet?"

"They had a banquet at the close of our winter meetings. They didn't get around to the dance. I think that will come next winter."

A YOUNG-FARMER CLASS BRING THEIR WIVES

Dick Jones was a new teacher of vocational agriculture in the school. He had had several very successful years as a teacher of vocational agriculture in another school and had now entered a situation where he would supervise student teachers and serve as a second teacher of vocational agriculture in a strong department.

Dick was visiting with the state supervisor one day about his new position. They were talking about experiences for student teachers and about the program in the school when Dick said, "You know, we've begun to serve some new territory out north and east of town. There's a bunch of young men out there that ought to be in a young farmer class, but I can't get them to come to our school. They went to high school in another town where they didn't have vocational agriculture and they feel out of place in our school. I don't know what to do about it."

The supervisor was interested. "I wonder why they won't come?" he asked.

"I don't know. I have asked them and I don't get much of an answer."

"Are they married?"

"Yes, most of them are. Maybe that's one reason they don't come. Besides it's hard to get them in the habit of coming to a new place. Do you suppose they would meet in their own neighborhood?"

The state supervisor was a little skeptical. He said, "Could you teach them any agriculture out there? You wouldn't have your equipment and materials to work with."

"That's true, but what about the wives. Wouldn't they object just as much to the boys meeting out there as here in town?"

"Well maybe," Dick said, "How about having them come along? After all they're just as interested as their husbands in these problems."

"Why don't you try it? Maybe the wives would be interested in budgets and accounting anyway. I suppose they keep the books, don't they?"

"Sure they do. I think I'll try it and see what happens."

"It'll be an interesting experiment anyway."

"Let me know how it comes out," was the reply of the supervisor.

* * * *

Four years passed and then the supervisor and Dick were visiting again. The supervisor said, "How did that young-farmer's class ever come out? That one where the wives were to be invited to come along?"

Dick replied, "Oh, that's still going. We meet once a month the year around and have a more concentrated series of meetings in the winter."

"Is that so! Don't they have a lot of babies? What do they do with them?"

"Oh, they bring them along and let them go to sleep, just like going to any other farm meeting."

"Do the women meet with the men every time?"

"No, sometimes they meet in a separate room and sew or work on foods for the family and other things like that. My wife goes out and works with them sometimes. Other times they meet with the men and we work on farm planning, farm accounts, and other problems they are interested in."

"Well that sounds good!"

"Yes, it's gone better than I had hoped. Now I find that I've got to start another group of the younger folks out there. This gang has developed its own recreation and has become a strong social group, so I'm getting ready now to get the younger one's started in their own group."

POST-HIGH SCHOOL FARMER TRAINING PROGRAMS

B. Adult-Farmer Programs

AN ADULT CLASS CARRIES ON

Before the out-break of World War II, I visited a series of adult classes in the Thumb of Michigan. The teachers of the area had previously held some meetings and discussed methods of conducting such classes. Adult-farmer classes were new in Michigan and teachers pooled their ideas and experiences for the purpose of promoting and improving their programs.

One feature characterized each of these classes, viz, the organization of the class group. In each instance, one of the class members acted as chairman. He called the meeting to order, appointed committees, and conducted other business of the group. A secretary read a report of the previous meeting. The report embodied any business which had been conducted and also a summary of the lesson which had been covered at the previous meeting. In each case the teacher of vocational agriculture then took over to lead the class in the lesson for the evening.

The report of the secretary served to give the teacher an idea of the interpretations from the previous meeting. The class was able to recall the previous discussion so that they had a common ground for beginning the new discussion.

I want to describe one of these meetings further. Approximately seventy-five persons attended the meeting. I have forgotten the subject, but I believe it was on some phase of dairying. At the close of the class discussion the teacher "turned the meeting back to the chairman," and he announced, "Now we'll have a meeting of the banquet committee, the rest of you may sit in, go to the gym for volley ball, or go on home."

I stayed for the committee meeting. Arrangements were made for food, dates were set and then the question of program came up. The teacher of vocational agriculture said, "I'm going down to the college on Saturday, do you want me to get a speaker?" It did not take long for them to agree on a certain member of the college extension staff as a desirable speaker. Then the chairman turned to the teacher and said,

"If you can get _ _ _ _ _ it will be OK but if you can't get him, don't get any, we'll run our own program."

Such independence paid dividends. Soon afterward the war began and this department closed for lack of a teacher, but this class didn't close. They held a class every winter throughout the war period. They drafted one of their number to act as teacher and they exchanged information and ideas of mutual benefit. They didn't bother with salary or reimbursement, but when the department was reestablished they were still operating and ready to take over the new agriculture man for their teacher. They are still going strong.

I feel sure that the early ideas of the group of teachers for placing responsibility on the farmer members of their classes, paid dividends in this instance. No doubt our newer ideas of advisory councils and committees can serve a similar purpose provided we place responsibility on them and give them the opportunity to do some independent planning and to carry out some purposeful activities. In any case the idea of independent, yet cooperative group action will pay off in terms of a long time functional program.

* * * *

1. As you see it, what is the role of the teacher in the adult-farmer program?

2. Is a "farmer run" adult class likely to result in the participation primarily by a "socially close" group to the exclusion of other farmers? Why or why not?

I VISIT AN ADULT FARMER CLASS

One cold winter evening, I drove into a small town in Michigan and went to the high school to visit the adult farmer class which was scheduled to meet in the agriculture room. The village is located in the Thumb of Michigan. It is the county seat of a prosperous agricultural county where beans and sugar beets are the chief cash crops and where dairying is the main livestock enterprise.

It was in the early part of World War II and the teacher who had served the community for several years had been called into service the previous spring. The new teacher had had many years of service in several different schools in Michigan and was in the middle of his first year in this town.

When the class was called to order, there were fifteen or twenty farmers present. The subject of the course was Farm Management and the lesson for the evening was on Size of Farm Business. I sat in the rear of the room beside a big, wide awake, burly farmer, and listened to the teacher discussing material from a chart which he had borrowed from the College of Agriculture. The chart was based on records from the farm account cooperators in Michigan. The teacher would say, "Now you see, the farmers with the biggest gross, got the most net income," and "you see, these farmers with the big farms made more than this group over here who had smaller farms."

No one else said anything, and as I looked around the group I was unable to detect any glimmer of interest on the part of any one present.

I have always been an unruly pupil and on this evening my farmer neighbor and I struck up a whispered conversation which began with my questions and his answers. It went something like this:

I leaned over and whispered, "How big a farm do you operate?"
"Two-hundred and forty acres," was the reply.
"Gee, that's quite a layout of this flat black land. What do you

grow?"

He replied, "Yeah, it's pretty good size. We grow some beans and sugar beets, and some hay and grain."

"Do you have some livestock then?"

"Yeah, we milk about forty head of cattle."

And so it went until I had a pretty good idea of the farming program, including crop yields; percentage of tillable acres in row-crops, legumes, etc.; machinery; and other data concerning the farm.

Then I asked, "With that kind of a layout, why do you bother to come to these classes?"

The answer came quick as a flash, "Oh, I made a thousand dollars on this class last year."

I as quickly replied, "I don't believe it, how come?"

"Well it was this way, he said, "Last year Jim was the teacher and we came down here for the meetin's. We was talking about feeding cows and Jim got each of us telling about what we was feeding. We all chipped in our two-bits worth and when we got done, Jim turned around to the black board and wrote down a grain mixture that would go with the roughage we had and that would use the feed we were growing. I copied it down and took it home and started feeding it to my cows. That ration saved me fifty cents a hundred on feed and that was worth 1000 dollars alone. Besides my production went up and I didn't count that!"

So I was convinced, and then I said, "But what have you got out of this course so far this year?"

"So far I haven't gotten a damn thing, but I'm still hoping! Besides I like to come down and see the boys once a week."

I feel this true story illustrates a vital point for teachers of vocational agriculture. The first teacher, who taught the dairy course, brought out the problems and questions of the farmers. He even brought about a situation in which they discovered additional weaknesses in their practices, and he helped them develop sound, practical solutions to their problems.

In contrast, the second teacher never once stopped to ask, "What is your situation?" with regard to the size of farm business. "What are some of the problems in your situation?" "What are some of the changes you could make to remedy that situation?" Let me hasten to add that there were problems in the group. I learned of some of them in my brief visit with my farmer friend in the class. I also learned that the group had decided with Jim at the close of the previous lessons on dairy, that their biggest problems lay in the area of farm management and, "they are still hoping!"

* * * *

1. How would you have taught the class?

AN ADULT CLASS ASKS FOR MORE

Just as the first brown furrows of early spring were being turned, I drove into a small Michigan village in the late afternoon. I walked over to the high school and called at the office of the superintendent of schools. We passed the time of day and then I inquired about the department of vocational agriculture. The teacher was a first year man, having graduated from the college the preceding June.

The superintendent was enthusiastic in his praise of his new agricultural teacher. He was a "good community man.' He "ran his classes well, and he cooperated with the other teachers in the matter of field trips and other activities which sometimes take pupils out of other classes."

The records had indicated that this teacher had an adult-farmer class which would meet during this evening. I asked the superintendent about it. He said the class had been very successful, however he "didn't approve of schools offering educational programs beyond the high school, and we aren't going to have any more of the damn nonsense." This class would close tonight and they would close up the adult program for good.

I was a little disheartened, but also pleased that the present class had gone well and that the teacher was doing a satisfactory job. I indicated that I would like to visit the class tonight and received a cordial invitation from the superintendent to do so.

When the time came for the class, I returned to the school and walked into the agriculture room. Eighteen farmers soon gathered around a big table with the teacher sitting at the head of the table. Of course he was nervous with a state supervisor present, but he managed to call the class to order.

When they came to order, the first thing the teacher said was, "Now this is the last meeting of this class for this year."

A big, unshaven farmer down the table said, "The hell it is!"

I thought the teacher would fall off his chair, but he finally managed a "What do you mean!"

"We gotta have more meetin's," was the reply.

After a moment of thought, the teacher said, "Why, you wouldn't come to meetings now that farm work is opening up, you'll be too busy."

There was a chorus of, "By _ _ _ _ _, we will!"

Then the teacher asked, "Well, what kind of meetings would you like?"

He immediately got a whole series of replies. One farmer said, "We gotta have some meetin's on chickens. I never paid no attention to the chickens on our place, but I guess I'm gonna have to. The government wants more eggs." (this was in the early months of World War II.)

Another farmer said, "Bill planted some of that new-fangled pasture out to his place. We ought'a have a meetin' out there about the first of July to see how its a doin'."

A third man said, "I wanna' have some meetin's on feeding cows on pasture."

There were several other contributions and finally they listed all of the items on the blackboard, set their dates for regular meetings for the summer months.

When the meeting closed the teacher said to me, "What shall I do? The superintendent said we wouldn't have any more adult-farmer classes?"

I suggested we wait until morning and then we would see the superintendent together. I thought we might be able "to work out something." I felt very sure that no school administrator would turn down such a demand from adults who were patrons of his school.

We called on the superintendent in the morning and presented the results of last evening's discussion. He voiced no objection, and enthusiastically entered into the business of setting the administative machinery in motion for carrying out the plans. And so was begun the first adult-farmer class in Michigan to meet regularly throughout the summer months.

I have tried to analyize what made this program click. I am not sure I can list all of the factors, but here are a few which I feel sure contributed:

1. The teacher had an intimate acquaintance with every member of his class. He knew their farms. He had talked over their plans with them and he was able to gear his instruction to help them to a solution of their problems.

2. The instruction was based on common problems of the group and emphasized practices and developed understandings which could be of immediate use to the class members.

3. The instructional procedure was informal. It encouraged much discussion and exchange of experiences; but it also never failed to present up-to-date, scientific information which was pertinent to the discussion. The teacher avoided allowing a member to draw incorrect conclusions from the ideas or experiences of his neighbor.

4. There was excellent cooperation between the county agricultural agent and the teacher. Both knew the others program, and they agreed on desirable practices which were needed for the improvement of the farming in the area.

5. There was the stimulus of demand for food production to meet war needs. I feel this was a relatively minor factor. However, it cannot be ignored. Farmers have always been willing and anxious to do their share in contribution to the general welfare of the nation.

6. Finally, there was a teacher who had a sincere interest in the community. He was motivated by a spirit of service. He was not afraid of work and he had a personality that radiated enthusiasm for the job of a teacher.

* * * *

1. Should a few farmers be permitted to "set policy" for a school dis-

trict by requesting an educational program? Why?

2. Should a school district offer instruction to adult farmers? Why?

I VISIT MY ADULT-FARMER CLASS MEMBERS ON THEIR FARMS

For many years I had had adult-farmer classes of a sort. The classes were a series of meetings, held during the winter months of the school year so that farmers could attend without interference with their work. As teachers we had never discussed adult classes as part of our program and we never bothered to report them to the state office in our annual reports. They were good public relations work and the results in terms of improved practices were worth far more each year in increased returns than our annual salaries. We felt this was sufficient justification for holding the classes.

But now I faced a new situation. I had moved to a new school and had become a supervising teacher with responsibility to organize and conduct a program which would provide satisfactory experience for student teachers. A new state administration for vocational education had announced that hence forth adult-farmer classes should be part of the program, and it was up to me to deliver.

A committee had been organized prior to my arrival and the members decided on the subject for their classes in the next year. Little information was left concerning potential members for the class and no one seemed to know whether there would be any interest in the subject.

During the summer, after my arrival, I called on all the adult-farmers I could contact. Our conversation would go somewhat as follows: "Good morning, I'm the new ag. teacher down at school."

"Well, glad to meet 'cha. I heard we had a new man down at school."

I would reply, "Well, I'm glad folks know about us anyway. Crops look pretty good this year, don't they?"

Usually I would get a reply such as, "Yeah, they ain't bad."

I would then steer the conversation around to such items as, "How many acres do you have here?" "How many cows do you keep?" "How many hens do you have?" Sometimes I would ask about yields of the crops and

production of livestock.

After I got answers to these questions I would say, "We're planning on some meetings down at school this winter. Some of the men thought they would like to discuss some of the problems on dairy. "What do you think about that?"

"That's a pretty good idea," would be the reply, "Ike Jones down the road here, he sure needs some help on how to feed his cows."

I would say, "Is that so, how about you bringing him along? I'll stop and see him, but you be sure to get him there!"

Most of the time the answer would be, "Yeah, I'll come, an' I'll try to get Ike to come too." Sometimes the reply would be, "Well, you see we ain't got only a small acreage here an' only one or two cows an' I work in the factory nights. But I'll come when I kin."

I would leave with some idea of the problems of the farm from the point of view of farm organization, livestock load, cropping program, and many other problems. I wanted that adult class to be a success!

Finally time came for the first meeting of the class. We had a good attendance of men with widely varied backgrounds. One farmer left school at the third grade. He had five scrub cows and worked in an automobile factory in the nearby city. Another farmer was a graduate in dairy husbandry from Michigan State College. He had a large herd of pure-bred Holsteins and was considered a very successful dairyman. Others were probably between these two extremes.

We discussed our plans for the courses and opened up a discussion on problems of feeding dairy cows for production.

I wanted to keep the discussion on a very practical level and still keep it challenging to every member of the class. I decided that I must learn more about the farms of my class members. I had visited all of them during the summer, but I had not gone into a detailed study of the practices on each farm with regard to the management of the dairy herd, so I decided I must visit these farms again.

Every afternoon, after my last all-day class I would start out to visit. I'd arrive at the farm, find the farmer if he was at home and we would begin our conversation something like this, "Let's see, you said you had ten cows didn't you?"

"Yeah, we have ten Holsteins. They ain't doing too well this year," would be the typical reply.

"That so, What's the matter?"

"Oh, I dunno, maybe it's the feed, or maybe it's something else, anyway it ain't so good."

While we visited I would walk toward the barn and then I'd say, "Let's take a look at the cows." When we got in the barn I would edge over to the hay mow and get hold of a sample of the hay. I'd look at the hay, studying its color, proportion of leaves, mixture, weeds, and coarseness of the stems. I would ask, "How much hay did you put up last summer?"

I would get a reply something like, "Oh, about twenty acres I guess."

"Let's see, that's about one and one'half tons to the acre. How long have you had hay on that field?"

"Oh, about three years. It's pretty hard to get a seedling, so we leave it as long as we can."

"Do you have much grass coming in?"

Often the reply would be, "No, not much. The hay is pretty good alfalfa, don't you think?"

This would give me an opportunity to point out the mixtures in the hay, and to suggest that a sample be brought in to class next time so we could plan rations to fit the kind of hay on the farm and also to compare hay from different farms.

Then we would get over to the grain bin and carry on a similar conversation about the grain mixtures. "What kind of commercial feed are you feeding?" "What protein supplement are you using with your corn and oats?" would be the typical questions.

Did these visits pay off? I thought they did. In the class discussions, I was able to say, "Bill, when I was at your place last week,

I saw some very good hay. Tell us how you mix a grain ration to balance with that hay. Would you need to change it if your hay had more grass in it?"

These questions helped me to develop the discussion on the level of the class members. Their interest was maintained and their practices improved.

* * * *

1. How can the teacher help the farmers become aware of possible causes and solutions to their problems?

2. What would you have done differently to organize and conduct an adult farmer class? Why?

A CLASS OF VETERANS DEVELOP SOME SOCIAL REFINEMENT

A few years ago, I went out from the state supervisor's office to visit schools. We were working with teachers at the time on the development of institutional-on-farm training for veterans. I arrived at one school where two classes for veterans had been organized. One of the classes met in the local school and the other met some miles away in a neighboring school. Both were under the same administration and were directed by the teacher of vocational agriculture whom I was visiting.

I spent some time with the teacher answering his questions and occasionally asking some, but always with the feeling that the teacher was about to say something, if I could only find a clue and get him to open up. Finally I must have hit the right chord for he said, "You know that class that meets over at _____ is a lot different than the one that meets here."

I said, "Is that so? How is it different?"

He replied, "Well, I don't know, those boys up there don't seem to have any pride. They come to class with their boots all covered with mud and manure. They seem to take pride in the fact that they don't shave for a week at a time. They cuss and swear, I guess they are just a rowdy bunch."

I said, "And the class that meets down here isn't like that?"

"No! They at least clean up when they come to class, and they watch their language a little bit."

Then I asked, "Well, what are you doing about it?" I wondered if he would say that he wasn't doing anything, or that/that had nothing to do with training for farming.

Instead he said, "Oh, we had a good Christmas party."

"You did? With both groups together?"

"Yes, I figured I had to do something. We'll never get the best kind of farmers unless we take care of some of those kinds of social problems. We got both groups together and they brought their sweethearts and wives along and really had a good time."

I was pleased and let him know it. Then I asked, "Are you doing anything else?"

He said, "Yes, we're having a banquet in the spring, along in March sometime. We'll get up a program and try to have a real banquet."

"Are those things doing any good?" I asked.

"Yes sir! They're beginning to clean up a little. They take a little more pride in their looks and manners and you can see it in their work in class."

"That's good. I agree you can't train men to be the best kind of farmers unless you help them to develop more than the farm skills necessary for profitable production. I think you are doing a fine job of training men to be farmers."

* * * *

1. Should agricultural instructors be concerned with instruction which is other than technical agriculture?

2. What other suggestions might you have offered to the agricultural teacher?

MY ADULT CLASS MEMBERS MAKE MONEY

During my first thirteen years of teaching vocational agriculture in high school I was never encouraged by local or state administrators to conduct adult-farmer classes. Adult-farmer classes were not considered an essential part of the program as they are today.

I felt, however, that an adult-farmer class would be a good undertaking. It would let the adults who attended know something of my programs; it would be a good public relations program; and it might give some farmers ideas which could be profitable on their farms. With these ideas in mind, I made a practice to invite in farmers of the area each winter for a "series of meetings" on some topic of interest to them.

One winter the series was on poultry. I was having only mediocre success. Attendence was regular, relationships were satisfactory, but I felt there was not much acceptance of new ideas, until one night in the early spring when we were discussing feeding of growing pullets.

We exchanged experiences and passed many suggestions back and forth. One of my contributions during the evening was to write on the black-board a ration recommended by Michigan State College for feeding growing pullets. One member of my group was the operator of a small country elevator some miles out of town. He was a part-time farmer, but his influence spread far and wide over the area because he sold a great many tons of feed each year. He contributed much free advice to his patrons and the advice coupled with his particular feeds had a great deal of influence on the feeding practices of the area.

When I put the college recommended ration on the board and showed that it consisted mainly of home-grown feeds, he said, "I don't believe that's any cheaper than the commercial brand of feed I'm selling."

I replied, "I don't know that it is. How much is your feed costing the farmers right now?"

He gave us the price, and then we figured up the cost of the college ration using his quotations for our prices. When we had finished he

said, "By gosh, it is cheaper isn't it."

We all agreed and I saw him reach for a piece of paper and copy down our ration. I had little hope that anything significant would happen as the result of our little conversation. However, I made it a point to drop in at the elevator a few days later and was pleased to find a nice big chart showing the college ration tacked up over the feed bins. I inquired about sales and was told, "Oh yes, we're telling everyone who comes in about that ration and they're buying it."

I checked at the close of the season, and for several seasons after that first one, and I found that each year in which I checked, the savings to farmers compared with the price of the commercial feed which had been sold previously, amounted to more than my annual salary. The manager of the elevator was pleased with results since the farmers gained new confidence in him and his business increased correspondingly. I checked with growers and they claimed to be getting equally good results with their growing flocks.

There could be many discussions concerning this little story. Some educators would insist that we should not measure results of our efforts in dollars and cents terms. I agree that dollars and cents is not the only criterion we should use, but when results are shown as clearly as they were in this case I think it helps. I know my superintendent and board of education were interested -- they didn't cut my salary either!

Some vocational educators might argue that my elevator friend should not have attended my adult-farmer class. After all he was not a farmer, and we weren't actually trying to improve his farming practices.

At that time I was not worried about this point since I had no official responsibility to check membership against any state or federal policy. This was just a group of farmers who got together because they were interested in finding solutions to their problems. They became good supporters of the department at the same time that they received some of the help which they wanted. The elevator man simply helped by "spreading the gospel" more rapidly and over a wider territory than

I could have reached. I tried to help him spread a gospel which would be of greatest value to the farmer patrons of his elevator.

* * * *

1. How would you evaluate the results of an adult class which you had taught?

2. Can you justify, "to improve the public relations of the school," as one objective for conducting an adult-farmer class?

3. Can you justify inviting the elevator manager, or other commercial agencies serving farmers, to become members of an adult-farmer class?

4. Do you believe that my work with this adult-farmer class had an ill effect on the manufacturer and distributor of the commercial feed which was sold through the elevator? If so, should I have refrained from presenting the college ration?

A BANQUET AND GRADUATION EXERCISES FOR VETERANS

"We're having a banquet tonight for the veterans who have finished their course under the G.I. training program and we'd like you to stay over for it." So said a teacher of vocational agriculture, who was also director of the veterans program, when I arrived at the school in the morning. There were three other teachers of agriculture in the school and I had come to visit one who was a first-year teacher of veterans. I was working with first year teachers on a program of in-service training.

"You mean you are having graduation exercises for veterans?" I asked.

"Yes, that's the idea," he replied. They'll bring their wives and we will present diplomas. We have a speaker coming from the college and are planning quite a nice program."

"Do the vets care about graduation exercises and diplomas?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the teacher, "They're looking forward to this event as an important affair. Some of them never got a diploma. They didn't graduate from high school, and they're all interested in having an event just for them."

What about your regular adult-farmer program?" I asked. Won't this affair tend to develop the idea that they are all done with school and that there is no need for them to enroll in your adult-farmer classes?"

"No, I don't think that will happen," he replied. "In fact, that's one of the things we discussed with the superintendent and all the agriculture teachers. We decided that we would try to develop the idea that upon graduation they will be ready to enroll in our adult-farmer courses. I think these seven who are graduating tonight are looking forward to enrolling in the adult-farmer classes right away."

"That's an interesting point that I hadn't thought about," I replied. "Maybe you've got something there. I'll be interested in the banquet program tonight and also in how well you succeed in holding these veterans

in your adult education program."

"So will I," replied the teacher.

I visited veterans with the first-year teacher during the day and when the time came for the banquet, I went to the high school. I found the crowd beginning to gather. I circulated among the veterans and their wives. When no one was around to introduce me, I would introduce myself to one of the veterans and his wife. Then we would discuss the weather and other neutral subjects for a few minutes. Finally, I would ask a question something like this, "What are you getting out of this farm training program anyway, besides the subsistence?"

"Oh, I get a lot out of it," was the reply in every case.

"But just what have you gotten that's any good to you," I would ask.

Typical answers were, "Well, my teacher helped me select some good dairy heifers to get my herd started up. You gotta have good stuff to make a go of it these days, an' we got some of the best. I never could have found 'em myself."

Another said, "My teacher got me to do a better job of feeding my hogs and I begun to use some protein supplement in the ration. It certainly has helped my hogs."

Still another said, "This new man, he's my teacher, come out to my farm an' he helped me figger out some strips on my farm to help control erosion. It's goin' to help me a lot. Crop yields'll increase an' I'll quit losin' all my soil down the creek."

After following this discussion for a few minutes, I would ask, "Well, what are you going to do when you graduate, like these men are doing tonight? Will you be all through then?"

Practically all the veterans in the group said, "No, we can't quit. This farming business is changing so fast that we've got to keep on going to school in order to keep up on new things. We're planning on enrolling in the adult classes they've got for non-veterans. We're eligible to join right now, but we figure we're better off under the G.I. training as long as it lasts. For one thing we get the subsistence, an' we need it to get started, and for another the teacher gets out to our place oftener than he can under the regular program.

When the crowd had gathered and my colleague from the college had arrived, we sat down for the banquet. The Future Homemakers did an excellent job of serving the food and the veterans and their wives seemed to enjoy themselves. The speaker gave a very good talk on the need for a continuous program of education for every individual; the importance of developing one's self so that he can make a maximum contribution to society; and the necessity for keeping abreast of events in a rapidly changing world. I thought he was right. The veterans liked his way of stating his points, but actually they had told me the same ideas before the meal. They were certainly thinking as we were. Possibly they were ahead of us.

After the speech, the president of the board of education gave out the diplomas and congratulated the graduates. He said, "The board of education wanted me to congratulate you on your achievement up to this point and we want to urge you to continue your educational program in our adult classes."

When the program was over and the photographers had finished their work, I found the teacher of agriculture and congratulated him on the success of the program and then I said, "I think you have accomplished your purpose. You have been able to graduate these men and at the same time I believe you are going to enroll them in the adult-farmer classes. Instead of graduation meaning that they are finished, you have been able to tie them closer to the school"

The teacher said, "That's what we hoped to do, as I told you this morning. I'll let you know how we come out. I'm glad you could stay."

So we said, "Good night," and I left. Later the teacher did write to tell me that all of the graduates of that evening had enrolled in the adult-farmer class.

* * * *

1. How would you try to motivate farmers to "desire" additional education?

YOU CAN'T DO THAT WITH ADULTS

We learn much by experience, and learning to teach adult-farmer classes is no exception. One cold winter night, I visited an adult-farmer class in Farm Mechanics which was being taught by one of my good agriculture teacher friends. I had been visiting his high school classes during the afternoon and he had invited me to his home for dinner and to visit the class in the evening.

At the house, the teacher said, "You know, we don't have much of a shop at school and it has been a problem to offer a course in farm mechanics for adults because of that."

I said, "I know. I wondered what you could do in that little industrial arts set-up. It's all filled up with wood working benches."

"That's right," he replied. "We got the farmers together and they wanted farm mechanics, so we rented a little building in another part of town and put in some tools and equipment. It isn't good, but the farmers seem to like it and I think we're doing some good."

"I'm sure you are," I answered. "Where did you get the tools and equipment to move into this shop?"

"The school board furnished most of it and the class members brought in some too. The board realizes that we need a new shop and they're willing for us to get tools and equipment to fit into a shop when they are able to build," replied the teacher.

"Do you have a pretty steady enrollment in your class?" I asked.

"Yes, they come every night unless they have a very good reason for not attending," answered the teacher.

After dinner, we went over to the small building which had been fixed up with a bench across one side and a few tool panels to make a shop for the adult class.

The farmers began to gather and as they arrived, they went to work on their individual projects. Some had projects requiring wood working tools, others had welding to do, one or two were cutting and threading

pipe for installing running water in their homes.

The teacher was busy circulating from one to another. Occasionally I would hear him say, "How about doing that this way?" and he would stop and demonstrate a practice or a skill that seemed to be lacking.

Once or twice during the evening he called together a group who seemed to have similar problems and demonstrated for them as a group, pointing out the key points which were essential for success in their jobs.

During the evening the teacher checked his roll and marked the attendence of each member just as carefully as if they were all-day students in the high school.

I was interested in watching the reactions of class members to this teacher, who was several years younger than any member of his class, when he would call them away from their jobs for a demonstration, or when he would say, "Let me show you how to do that." I wondered if they would accept these methods from their teacher.

The crowning event of the evening came when the period was about one-half over. One of the farmers came up to the teacher and I overheard him say, "I have to leave early tonight, my wife _ _ _ _ _."

The teacher said, "That sounds like a reasonable excuse. Do you want to leave now?"

The farmer sounded much relieved and said, "Yeah, I'd like to. Will it be okay?"

The teacher said, "Are your tools all picked up and your place cleaned up? Let's go see."

They went over where the man had been working and the teacher said, "That looks pretty good, and the tools are all in place. Okay, go ahead, see you next time."

I thought, "I wish all teachers could command that much respect and that much cooperative spirit on the part of class members."

1. Was I right in my thought, or should the teacher have allowed more freedom?

2. What do you think are the qualities needed by a teacher to be successful in his work with adults?

3. In what ways should an adult class be different than a high school class?

I ACCOMPANY AN ADULT CLASS ON AN ALL-DAY FIELD TRIP

"On the day you are planning to visit our agriculture program, we are planning on taking an all day field trip with the adult-farmer class. Our high school will be closed that day and the adult class wanted to take this field trip, so we scheduled it. I hope you can come and take the time to go with us on the trip. We will leave the school at 9:00 AM." So said a letter I received from a teacher of agriculture who had been notified that the state supervisor would visit his department on this date.

It always pleases me to find a teacher who goes ahead with his program, without any apology, and without modification when the supervisor announces his visit, so I notified the teacher that I would plan to make the trip with him.

I arrived at the school early and found the teacher already there. Some of his adult class members were gathering. I asked, "What kind of a field trip are you taking today?"

One of the farmers replied, "We have been studying some soil conservation in our class this winter an' we figured we would like to see some of the conservation practices that's going on in our own county."

I said, "You mean the trip will be around this county? You aren't going outside the county?"

The farmer replied, "Yeah, we been hearing a lot about what's going on right here at home. Some of our neighbors been doing some things, but we figured if we spent the day at it we'd get a better idea of the whole thing."

I turned to the teacher and asked, "What did you cover in the adult class this winter?"

"Oh, we talked about the soil on our farms. We did some testing and learned some things about erosion control, planting the right crops on the soil, and that sort of thing."

I asked, "Are you taking any other people along today besides your adult class members?"

"Yes," was his reply, "A couple of farmers who weren't in the class heard about our trip and asked if they could go. I told them to come along. They might sign up for the class next year. I also asked the county agricultural agent to come along. He's been working on soil conservation for a long time and we thought he might contribute to our trip."

I wondered who had planned the trip and if the farmer class members had had a part in the planning, so I turned to another farmer and asked, "What kind of things are you going to see today? Will it be strip cropping or tree planting, or what?"

His answer gave me the information I really was after. He said, "We'll see both of those things. I ain't never seen all the things we plan to see today, but we're goin' to see some pine plantings on the dunes along Lake Michigan where they've stopped the sand from blowing. I got some sand on my place an' if it looks good I'm goin' to try some myself. Besides them pine makes good Christmas trees."

Another farmer interrupted with, "Yeah an' we're goin' up to one of them there blueberry marshes that's been cleared an' planted in the last year or two. I got some of that kind of land on my place an' maybe I ought'a clear it up an' get it producin' something."

A third farmer contributed, "From there we're going over in the other corner of the county where they was havin' a lot of trouble with blowing. They say there's a man over there that's stopped it by planting his crops in strips. That's what I want to see."

Before we had finished the teacher interrupted to say, "Well, let's get under way. I think we can all get in one bus and I'll drive. If anybody can't stay all day, he may want to follow along in his car. Here's the plan for the day showing the location of each stop and describing what we're going to see. Everyone can have one of these sheets and then we'll have them to remind ourselves when we meet in class next time. At that time we'll discuss what we've seen. If there are no questions, we can get in Number 20 bus out in front of the building."

1. Do you feel that the field trip would be successful? What factors would cause it to be successful? What factors would contribute to lack of success?

2. How would you evaluate this field trip as a means of instruction? Would the fact that the class members knew of the places they would stop and that they knew what they would see, be likely to lower their interest?

3. Do you think it wise to organize and conduct a field trip for adult-farmers in their own county?

AN EXTENSION SPECIALIST DEMONSTRATES QUALITY OF EGGS

Many years ago a few teachers of vocational agriculture in the country organized groups of adult-farmers for a series of meetings during the winter months. Today we would call these adult-farmer classes, but in those earlier days we simply said, "a series of meetings."

Occasionally we would invite in a speaker for one of our meetings. He helped maintain interest and he sometimes brought new information which the farmers felt was worth while.

In one instance an extension specialist whom I had invited for one of my meetings demonstrated his points in a way which, at that time, was novel and new, yet which really demonstrated a high degree of teaching skill. Let me tell you about him.

The series of meetings was on poultry. This particular evening the subject was quality of eggs and I had invited the extension specialist from the college, since I felt that I didn't know much about the subject.

The specialist arrived about one-half hour before the meeting was scheduled to begin. I greeted him as he came in and we shook hands. Then he said, "What did you have in mind for tonight?"

I replied, "We usually have thirty five or forty farmers in each meeting. They have laying flocks of one-hundred to ten or fifteen hundred layers. Lately we've been hearing a lot about quality of eggs. The buyers are talking of paying a premium for eggs from certain flocks because they are consistently better quality. What we'd like to know is, 'What are the factors that affect quality and what can we do about them?' Besides, I think we need to know something about, 'What is good quality in an egg anyway?' I'm sure that a lot of us don't know a good quality egg from a poor one when we see it, unless it's completely spoiled."

The specialist smiled and said, "I guess you're right. At least that's true of most people. We'll do our best and see if we can answer some of the questions you have raised."

I watched as the farmers gathered. The specialist had not come loaded down with the usual pack of charts and mimeographs. He had two or three egg cartons and he borrowed a few saucers from my store room. That was all.

As the farmers gathered, he took time from his preparation to shake hands and visit for a minute with each one. When the meeting began he had already been introduced to every farmer in the group and he knew a little of the poultry enterprise of each man.

After the formal opening of the meeting, members of the group raised a few questions on the subject of quality of eggs and then I called on our specialist to give us some facts on the subject of what is a good quality egg, and to make recommendations as to practices which would help improve the quality of the eggs.

The specialist arose and began his remarks with, "A good many of us don't know just what to look for when we look at eggs to determine their quality. I would like to show you some of the things we have been studying at the college."

As he spoke he opened one of the cartons and broke an egg into one of the saucers. He continued, "We have noted that a really fresh egg stands up, like this. Now here's one," - breaking another egg into a second saucer, "which spreads out more and is flatter. It is not as good as the first, although it is perfectly edible."

Before he had finished, the specialist had broken a dozen eggs representing different qualities. He had explained some of the factors which affected quality and had listed practices the farmers might use to improve the quality of the eggs they marketed.

After the meeting, I congratulated the specialist on his fine demon-

stration. I said, "That's the first time I have seen anyone do that kind of a demonstration."

The specialist said, "It seems to be an effective way to get people to see the differences in quality of eggs."

"It certainly gets interest," I replied. "Did you notice those men sit up when you began to break those eggs?"

"Yes, they always do. I suppose they think there's a lot of money being wasted," he replied.

"Maybe they do, but they also appreciate a new way of presenting material and they've got sense enough to realize that the cost amounted to only one or two cents per person here tonight. If one man improves one practice, it will save more than that on just a small fraction of a day's production."

"That's right," replied the specialist.

"It's a real challenge to me as a teacher and to you as a specialist to keep up with new ideas, and to develop new ones, on methods of teaching. This idea of yours is new to me and I think it's good," I said.

"It certainly is a challenge. It will only be a short time before this demonstration will have to be changed for something better. It keeps all of us on our toes to keep finding new and better ways to present our materials," was his reply.

* * * *

Select a problem or a job and outline a new method of presenting the material, which you believe will be more effective than any you have seen to date. Try to be original as the extension specialist was in his day.